

Northern and Yorke Landscape Board

Achievements

2024–2025

Caring for land, water and nature



Northern and Yorke landscape region

WAKEFIELD

Council name and boundary

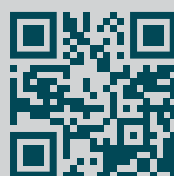
NARUNGA

First Nation community



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read more online*



Acknowledgement of Country

The Narungga, Ngadjuri, Nukunu, Peramangk and Kaurna people are the Traditional Custodians of the Northern and Yorke region. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the deep spiritual relationship that Aboriginal people have to Country and the ongoing contribution they make to this region.

Introduction

From the coast to the ranges, the Northern and Yorke region is rich in productive farmland, diverse wildlife and stunning natural places to explore. Working hand in hand with local communities, First Nations and partner organisations, the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board is committed to caring for the land, water and nature that make this region so special.

As one of nine landscape boards across South Australia, we deliver and support on-ground programs that help people live and work sustainably with the environment. Backed by funding from the landscape levy, the Australian Government and conservation organisations, our work ensures these treasured landscapes continue to thrive for generations to come.

This report highlights just some of the achievements we're proud to have delivered across the Northern and Yorke region in 2024–2025.

Board members

In early 2025, three new members were appointed to our Board. Holly Cowan, Nicki Robins and Leo Redden joined existing members Geoff White (Chair), Peter Angus, Erika Lawley and Sue Scarman. We farewelled outgoing members Sam Germein, Jenny Loftes, Bruce Michael and Adrian Shackley and were very saddened by the passing of Russell Johnstone in December 2024, who made a strong contribution to natural resource management in South Australia over many years.



More about our board members here

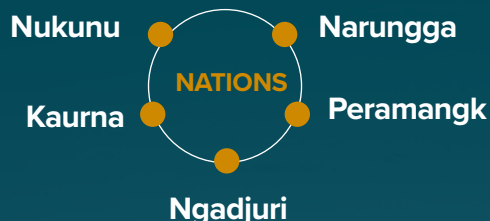
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About **150,000 people** live in the **Northern and Yorke region**

Total region spans **38,500km²**

Traditional Custodians:



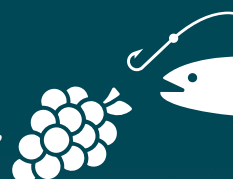
Major centres: Balaklava, Burra, Clare, Gawler, Kadina, Nuriootpa, Orroroo, Peterborough, Port Pirie.



About **80% of the region** is under **agricultural cropping** and grazing production, contributing a quarter of South Australia's agricultural earnings.

Other industries:

Wine production in the Clare Valley and Barossa Valley, mining and mineral processing, fishing, aquaculture, forestry, horticulture and tourism.



More than **1,000km of coastline**

Average annual **rainfall of 250-600mm**



15,500km² of marine areas







Communities

Active. Informed. Knowledgeable.

Engaging with volunteers, community, schools, landholders, industries, Aboriginal groups, and local government.

Kids come to coastline's rescue

Port Broughton Area School students pitched in at two planting days over 12 months to help revegetate the coastal reserve at South Beach Port Broughton, where a 2016 storm surge damaged fencing, vegetation and caused sand erosion. Through funding from our Djulda-wawa Badja project, Barunga West Council replaced exclusion and drift fencing and supplied some of the native plants to help the area recover.

Meanwhile, more than 100 children from schools in the Mid North braved chilly and windy weather to help revegetate patches of farmland. As part of the Clare Valley Biodiversity Blitz, the students planted nearly 2,500 native species. It was delivered and co-funded by Three Corners Consulting, Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, Landcare Association of SA, Arborgreen, Yundi Nature Conservancy, Ag Excellence Alliance Inc, Bio Gro, Medika Gallery and Trees For Life (SA).

ABCs of nature at Appila Springs

Students from 9 schools in the Southern Flinders region spent a day at Appila Springs in September 2024 learning all about nature.

Organised by the Caltowie Corridors of Green community group, this annual event is an immersive day outside for students. Our landscape officers shared their waterbug knowledge and helped the students score the health and diversity of Appila Springs. The event was funded by a Grassroots Grant from the Board.

Volunteers hustle through heat for biennial bird count

Extreme temperatures, windy weather and a high tide played havoc with BirdLife Australia's biennial beach-nesting bird count along Yorke Peninsula coastlines in November. Despite these difficulties local volunteer coordinator Nanou Cabourdin organised 29 volunteers, seven Northern and Yorke Landscape Board staff and a Dhillba Gurranda-Innes National Park ranger for the two-week count that covered 88 routes across 368 kilometres.

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Tree monitoring training for Nukunu

Six Nukunu First Nations people completed training to monitor the health of river red gums in the Southern Flinders. The survey method, shared by Dr Todd Wallace, helped to monitor changes to the gum trees along Baroota and Crystal Brook creeks, which have received environmental and cultural water flows during the past four years. Preliminary results showed that the condition of trees at some sites has improved substantially between the baseline survey and the surveys completed in November.



Yarning circle first step in connecting winery and First Nations

The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board supported the first step in a genuine connection between traditional custodians and a Barossa winery business. Hill-Smith Family Estates hosted our Five Nations Landscape Committee at its Heggies Vineyard in the Eden Valley. The business has committed to welcoming Peramangk and Ngadjuri people, the traditional custodians of the land where it has wineries and several vineyards.

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1,276 volunteers generously provided **56,281** volunteer hours in our region

1,017 volunteer events supported

28 community groups received free insurance through the Board

32 partnerships with regional alliance, local councils, NGOs and community groups

7 schools received support via our grant funding

39 schools involved in cultural education sessions through our Nature Education program



Funded **34** Grassroots Grants, totalling **\$335,544** and **\$380,421** in-kind value

\$27,000 funded by the Board for cultural education sessions



\$94,950 spent on Aboriginal employment, services or products

12 First Nation projects, with **\$29,985** funded by Grassroots or Bite-sized Grants

3 First Nations Landscape Committee meetings



On Facebook, we reached **152,741** people, added **577** new followers and had **23,183** Facebook page visits



Biodiversity

Protected. Improved. Restored.

Protecting ecosystems, native vegetation, threatened and listed species, Aboriginal significant sites, rivers and creeks, coasts and marine areas.

Yorke Peninsula home to growing numbers of endangered marsupials

Brush-tailed bettongs (yalgiri to Narungga people) reintroduced to southern Yorke Peninsula since 2021 are not just surviving, they're reproducing. Researchers for the Marna Banggara project checked the yalgiri in October 2024 and May 2025 and found positive signs of a growing population.

Out of the 83 bettongs captured in October, 31 were new animals born on Yorke Peninsula and 22 out of the 26 females were carrying pouch young.

There were also positive signs during the May check-in. The team captured 22 yalgiri over three nights of trapping. "All of the females captured were carrying pouch young, which shows that they're healthy enough to reproduce, even in tough environmental conditions," said Claire Hartvigsen-Power, Marna Banggara's ecologist.

Locally extinct for more than a century, 193 brush-tailed bettongs were reintroduced to southern Yorke Peninsula between 2021 and 2023. Marna Banggara is jointly funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.

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Sniffer dogs in training to track tiny lizards in Mid North

Detection dogs were part of an investigative team searching for endangered pygmy blue-tongue lizards in the Northern and Yorke region. Flinders University, Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, Nature Foundation and Conservation & Detection Dogs SA teamed up to improve the survival prospects of this tiny lizard that now remains only in South Australia's Mid North.

The dogs tracked pygmy bluetongue lizards (*Tiliqua adelaidensis*) in grassland areas, using finely-honed smell receptors to locate lizards hidden deep in trap door spider holes, which the lizards commonly call home. It is part of a 2-year conservation project in the Northern and Yorke region.

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Marna Banggara

83 brush-tailed bettongs (yalgiri) monitored on southern Yorke Peninsula – some found 5km from release site



1,000 yalgiri – estimated total population

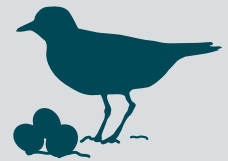
15,000 nights of camera monitoring for predators



25,000 hectares of targeted fox and feral cat control

2,700 kilometres of ground baiting to control foxes

122 malleefowl mounds monitored



327 hooded plovers monitored across **360** km of YP coastline

41% of the **total SA** hoodie population and **11%** of **global** population resides on Yorke Peninsula



Pygmy blue-tongue project

20 pygmy blue-tongue lizards found during surveys in the Mid North



9 waterpoints added to improve grazing management

10 kilometres of fencing installed to assist with rotational grazing



1,041 hectares of habitat protected



New strategy guides action on protecting Yorke Peninsula's coast

More than 2,100 responses flowed in from across the state during the public consultation of the Draft Guuranda – Yorke Peninsula Coastal Access Strategy 2025–2035. The 10-year strategy aims to balance sustainable coastal access for off-road vehicles with preserving fragile ecosystems and Narungga cultural sites, which hold deep spiritual significance. Led by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, the strategy was developed collaboratively with the Narungga Nation Aboriginal Corporation (NNAC), Barunga West, Copper Coast and Yorke Peninsula councils, Department for Environment and Water and local stakeholders.

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Kids create eastern osprey nests

Students at Central Yorke School's Point Pearce campus created nests in April as part of a community-led mission to increase eastern osprey numbers on Yorke Peninsula. Two of the six nests are now in position, lowered onto newly-installed artificial platforms by helicopter at Point Pearce and Port Wakefield in May. It's all part of the Eastern Osprey Recovery program, a community project spearheaded by Southern Yorke Peninsula Landcare Group and Friends of Osprey, with funding support from the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board through its Djulda-wawa Badja project.

Eight platforms have been installed on Yorke Peninsula since 2021 in a bid to turn around a 26% decline in South Australia's osprey population. Raptor expert Ian Falkenberg said that 10 juvenile osprey were produced during the 2024 breeding season, with four of those raised on artificial platforms. Plus, another osprey pair has taken up residence on a fifth platform.

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Growing cultural knowledge

A visit to Red Centre Enterprises, a proud First Nations business that grows native ingredients for food and medicine, is set to positively impact future revegetation efforts and on-ground projects in the Northern and Yorke region. As part of our commitment to building strong partnerships with First Nations communities, several of our landscape officers visited Red Centre Enterprises in Lower Light in May. It was an opportunity to learn from owners Yuandamarra and Nadia about the cultural and environmental value of native plants.

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Spreading the lomandra love

The Board continued its mission to plant 2000 native iron-grass seedlings across 10 pastoral properties in the Mid North, thanks to funding through the Australian Government's Saving Native Species program.

Iron-grass have long, strap-like leaves and small cream-coloured flowers and are excellent soil stabilisers, reducing erosion and holding soil together during dry seasons and drought.

They shelter highly palatable species from grazing, allowing native peas, lilies and other plants to survive and reproduce within pastures. They're also good to have in lambing paddocks, as the high tussocks give lambs and ewes shelter from cross-paddock winds, and they play a role as a food plant for several native butterflies and insects.

Djulda-wawa Badja project

5 hectares of coastal weed control

1,000 seedlings planted across three locations



2 osprey nests and towers direct constructed

2,104 people had their say on the Draft Yorke Peninsula – Guuranda Coastal Access Strategy

24 interpretative Narungga heritage and caring for Country posts



30 partnership groups involved in Djulda-wawa Badja, working together to protect the coast

6.65 kilometres of fencing at eleven locations





Water management

Efficient. Sustainable. Monitored.

Protecting watercourses, permanent pools, water use, groundwater, cultural water, environmental flows, water-dependent ecosystems, river red gums, and saline wetlands and lakes.

Baroota and Beetaloo water releases set to enliven ecosystems

Two southern Flinders Ranges creeks that rarely experience natural flows sprung to life with reservoir-fed water releases in August 2024.

More than a billion litres of water from the two releases flowed into Baroota and Crystal Brook creeks to improve the resilience of river red gums, refresh habitat for frogs, fish, birds and waterbugs, and help the Nukunu community care for Country. The releases are part of the collaborative Environmental and Cultural Flows project, led by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board with support from SA Water, the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), Flinders University, Nukunu Wapma Thura Aboriginal Corporation and local communities.

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Students dip toes into citizen science

Our waterways are in good hands, with students from Clare and the Barossa learning how to monitor water health at Waterwatch training sessions in September 2024.

About 50 budding citizen scientists attended hands-on training sessions at Gleeson Wetlands and Bethany Reserve. They went back to school with water quality monitoring and macroinvertebrate kits that they'll use to monitor a local site each month during the 'flow season' from May to November.

Waterwatch is a schools-based program where data collected by students is added to an online database, providing a better picture of water quantity, quality and long-term trends across our region. It is delivered by Northern and Yorke, Hills and Fleurieu and Murraylands and Riverland landscape boards, through funding from the South Australian Government's Environmental Citizen Science Grants program.



Ngadjuri guides water care

Cowie or kowi (water) was the main topic of conversation with Ngadjuri representatives Aunty Ros Weetra and Rebecca Agius at our Gawler office.

Our First Nations partnerships team met with the First Nations women for their cultural perspectives on cowie in the Barossa and Clare Valley. The workshop explored integrating Ngadjuri knowledge in the schools-based Waterwatch program, to ensure that First Nations voices guide how we care for our environment.

The group explored traditional stories and cultural perspectives on water and its significance, the inclusion of Ngadjuri language on our monitoring data forms and how physical barriers, like weirs, dams and reservoirs have altered natural water systems and impacted plants and animals. We also discussed the impacts of Ngadjuri exclusion from land and waterways, which has affected their connection to Country. It was a powerful step toward co-designing a Waterwatch program that integrates Ngadjuri knowledge and supports healing on Country.



Environmental and Cultural Flows

1,300 ML of water released for environmental and cultural needs



37 surface water,
8 ground water,
15 tree condition index and
22 fish survey monitoring sites

4 weir pools in Barossa surveyed to identify water volume

20 First Nations people engaged in the project

Regenerating Catchments

17 landholders involved

7,618 metres of fencing erected to protect watercourses

9,325 metres of watercourse protected or enhanced through fencing, weed control and/or revegetation



54.8 hectares of revegetation completed, including 14,085 seedlings planted and **12,000** metres of direct seeding



36.5 hectares of woody weed control

8 off stream water points installed and **4** community planting days held

Waterwatch Bioblitz

27 water monitoring sites

5 local schools participated, with 50 students trained in water quality monitoring



17 Water Affecting Activities enquiries, with **44** permits issued

2 Water Allocation Plans (WAPs) in progress



Sustainable agriculture

Adaptive. Resilient. Healthy.

Enhancing soil, water and biodiversity value to build resilience in agricultural systems.

Carbon farming workshops increase farmer confidence

Farmers are learning the fundamentals of carbon farming through a series of workshops run by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board's sustainable agriculture and climate experts.

The Beginner's Guide to Carbon Farming and Carbon Calculator Deep(er) Dive workshops share the benefits and risks of this emerging agricultural opportunity, while a new podcast is a handy resource during the long tractor hours throughout seeding and harvest. The first episode of the What you need to know now podcast features the Board's sustainable agriculture facilitator Molly O'Dea who explains the what, why and how of carbon farming, along with how to reduce emissions, store more carbon, and navigate the Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme.

The workshops and podcasts are funded by the Commonwealth of Australia through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water under the Carbon Farming Outreach Program.

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Farmer grants boost drought resilience

Primary producers across the Northern and Yorke region shared in more than \$300,000 of funding to adopt sustainable land management practices and improve long-term drought resilience.

Sixty-seven property owners, who collectively manage more than 219,000 hectares across the Northern and Yorke region were offered up to \$5,000 through the On-Farm Dry Times Grants program. The Board received an unprecedented 272 funding applications from farmers looking to improve their livestock, soil and water resources.

The funds are designed to help farmers create livestock containment areas, set up rotational grazing infrastructure, and also protect dams and watercourses through exclusion fencing and planting of native trees and grasses that provide shade for stock and improve soil, water and overall biodiversity health.

The On-Farm Dry Times Grant program marks the start of the \$2 million ACE Farmers: Adapting to Climate and Emissions project, a sustainable agriculture initiative delivered by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board from January 2025 until June 2028. This project is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program.



Keeping farmers in-the-know

The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board launched a resource to share the latest information and opportunities for people working in agriculture in the region. Run by the Board's Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator Molly O'Dea, it is a dedicated web page for producers, agribusinesses and agricultural organisations. It features current grants, upcoming events, as well as scholarships and research opportunities. Reminders are sent via email twice a month to subscribers.

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Tech and finance on agenda for young farmers

More than 20 young farmers gathered at Port Broughton in early April to learn about the latest tech from precision ag experts and gain a better understanding of production costs.

Michael Zwar from Ag Tech Services piqued everyone's interest with his new drone and ability to undertake weed mapping. While farmers Ed Hunt from Wharminda and Andrew Slater from Yorke Peninsula shared valuable insights into farm profitability and calculating cost of production. Thanks to Stefan Schmitt from Northern Sustainable Soils who was instrumental in making this event happen.

21 field days and events



68 Dry Times grants totalling \$305,000 to improve the health of livestock, soil and water across 219,000 ha

39,800 hectares improved through adapting to climate conditions with the support of the ACE Farmers program



187 landholders educated by Carbon Outreach Officer at 12 events

332 landholders supported by Sustainable Ag Facilitator

10 farming system groups and industry bodies supported

9 workshops attended by 96 farmers

Stronger Country



20 land managers supported to project **iron-grass natural temperate grasslands and peppermint box woodlands**

41,636 hectares improved through land management incentives

292,670 hectares protected through property management plans and assessed for potentially increasing endangered habitats





Pest plants and animals

Targeted. Coordinated. Collaborative.

Reducing economic and environmental impacts of pests

Yorke Peninsula on high alert for boneseed outbreaks

Northern and Yorke Landscape Board's landscape officers are using GPS mapping, winter control and spring surveys to restrict the declared weed boneseed from invading native bushland and dunes on Yorke Peninsula. They are on high alert for outbreaks of the pest plant, which produces bright yellow flowers in spring. "The problem with boneseed is that once it sets seed it quickly multiplies and overruns understory plants and invades intact bushland," said the Board's Nick Nicholls.

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Controlling pests to protect the land

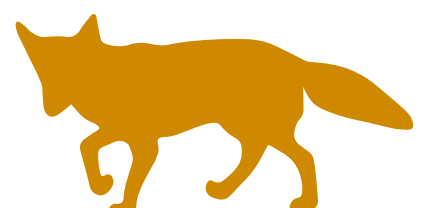
A landscape-scale pest animal project, Now or Never, is using state-of-the-art thermal technology and pest control professionals to address the damaging issue of feral deer and goat populations.

Goats and deer have a devastating impact on agriculture and the health of our environment, trampling native vegetation, destroying habitat for native animals and negatively affecting water quality and soil cover.

In March 2025, our team covered more than 185,000 hectares in the Southern Flinders Ranges with SAAL Landscape Board and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) to cull 7,468 goats and 487 deer. In April 2025, 3,914 goats were mustered and 783 culled in the Rangelands.

With regional communities struggling in dry times, it's more important than ever to work with private landholders to remove pest animals that impact farming and natural resources.

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Biocontrol releases along rivers get job done in Mid North

The biocontrol agent cochineal, a tiny insect that feeds on the invasive opuntia cactus plant, conquered populations of the declared weed during the hot, dry summer months. Our landscape officers released the host-specific cochineal at more than 50 sites along the Broughton River and in the Mid North in 2025.

It proved particularly effective on drooping pear cactus (*Opuntia monacantha*) in both districts, taking just 12 months, instead of an anticipated two-year timeframe, to decimate the cactus populations. As landscape officer Jamie Pook said, "This year's dry and hot conditions are ideal for cochineal."

Cochineal is a great option for controlling opuntia cacti in hard-to-reach locations like riverbanks and in areas with sensitive native vegetation, where you want to avoid off-target chemical damage.

Weed warriors join forces in Mintaro

Woody weeds like feral olives and boxthorns are introduced plants that invade and dominate the environment. They outcompete native plants that would otherwise increase biodiversity and attract beneficial bugs – the variety of life that helps to keep us and our environment healthy.

The good folk of Mintaro came together in March to learn how to control woody weeds from expert Greg Donovan. They learnt about basal barking,

a weed control method where the lower trunk of the woody weed is treated with herbicide, which protects surrounding native plants from off-target damage. It was heartening to see so many members of the public learn how to improve their property and the wider Mintaro landscape.

Community rallies to tackle pests amid drought

In the face of persistent drought, landholders across the Rangelands district have shown remarkable resilience and community spirit by uniting to protect both their livelihoods and the environment.

Recognising the financial strain caused by dry conditions and rising costs, the Board's Rangelands team stepped in with a timely solution - offering a 50% subsidy on all pest control products during March and April. The initiative aimed to make pest control more accessible for landholders, helping reduce pressure from foxes, rabbits, and wild dogs - species that heavily impact the fragile landscape and native wildlife.

An overwhelming 111 landholders took part, resulting in the sale of 17,640 bait products - a staggering 379% increase in bait sales and a 146% rise in landholder engagement compared to 2024. By banding together, landholders demonstrated the power of collective action. Their efforts not only protect stock and crops but also help restore ecological balance in a struggling landscape.



276 landholders involved in fox bait distribution in spring and autumn

6 meat injection days to control predators in the Rangelands district

3,765 km of road and rail weed control

634 enquiries including pest plant and animal control advice



5 rabbit control workshops, combined with **24** virus release sites and **20** baiting sites



1,296 feral deer controlled

7,373 feral goats removed

Biological weed control



42 sites supplied with plume moth for horehound control

40 hectares of biological control for prickly pear

15 council roadside weed management plans



\$23,600 spent on buffel grass control on roadsides and 135 km of rail corridors surveyed for buffel infestations

Achievement snapshot

The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board works alongside the community, Traditional Custodians, councils and other stakeholders to sustainably manage landscapes and maximise the ecological, environmental, economic and social benefits for the region. Here is a snapshot of the key projects and activities delivered in 2024-2025:

	Communities	\$1.37m
	Support for development of Healthy Country Plans	✓
	Nature Education program	✓
	Five Nations Landscape Committee	✓
	Grassroots and Bite-sized grant programs	✓
	Insurance support for community land management groups	✓
	Biodiversity	\$3.36m
	Marna Banggara project	✓
	Djulda-wawa Badja project	✓
	Regenerating Catchments in the Mid North Farmscape	✓
	Water Management	\$1.53m
	Environmental and Cultural Flows project	✓
	Barossa and Baroota water allocation planning	✓
	Promotion of environmental and cultural flows in water management planning	✓
	Sustainable Agriculture	\$1.72m
	Weather station and soil moisture sensors	✓
	Soil Extension Officer and related projects	✓
	Sustainable Agriculture Officer	✓
	Pest Plant and Animal Control	\$2.71m
	Coordinated fox and rabbit control programs	✓
	Release biological controls for pest weeds	✓
	Rail and road corridor weed management plans	✓
	Pest control workshops and advice	✓



Keep in touch

Here are some of the ways you can keep up-to-date with the latest news from the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board:



landscape.sa.gov.au/ny



ny.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au



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